

7 front panel of said backpack to provide cushioned back support on opposite
8 sides of a user's spinal column along at least a thoracic region thereof when
9 said backpack is carried on the user's back, said bladders each having an
10 *A1* upper terminus extending upwardly at least as high as right and left upper
11 attachment points and the gap space being aligned over the user's spinal
12 column;
13 pump means for inflating said pair of bladders; and
14 valve means for deflating said pair of bladders.--

Please amend Claim 9 as follows:

1 *Sub B¹7* --9.(Amended) A backpack system for reinforceably supporting a
2 user's back, said backpack having a front panel comprising a back-facing
3 surface supporting a right and a left shoulder strap, extending downwardly
4 from a right and a left upper attachment point, said backpack system
5 comprising:
6 *A2* a backpack having a front panel;
7 a pair of elongated inflatable bladders spaced generally parallel to each
8 other and separated by a gap space, said bladders each having an upper
9 terminus extending upwardly at least as high as said right and left upper
10 attachment point and the gap space being aligned over the user's spinal
11 column;